

# FAFSA 2025-2026: What You Need to Know

December 5, 2024



Host: Jenny Parks, Vice President, Policy and Research, MHEC



Any resources available will be posted on the MHEC website post-event.



Engage with colleagues in the chat.



Keep your questions in the Q&A!



Please complete our survey.

# Presenters



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# 24-25 FAFSA Status

## 24-25 FAFSA STATUS

- Over 16 million FAFSAs have been submitted-approximately **2% less** than this time last year for all students
- High school seniors still **down 8.8%** as of late November
- FSA recently fixed some Known Issues for 24-25 - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/topics/fafsa-simplification-information/fafsa-issue-alerts>
- People with the last name of “Null” are now able to submit a FAFSA
- Several other technical glitches recently fixes
- Batch corrections for colleges are coming in Q1 2025
- FAFSA completions are an indicator of likelihood for enrollment-true again this year - <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/traditional-age/2024/10/23/after-fafsa-issues-steep-drop-first-year-enrollment>

# 25-26 FAFSA Updates

## CHANGES/ ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE 25-26 FAFSA

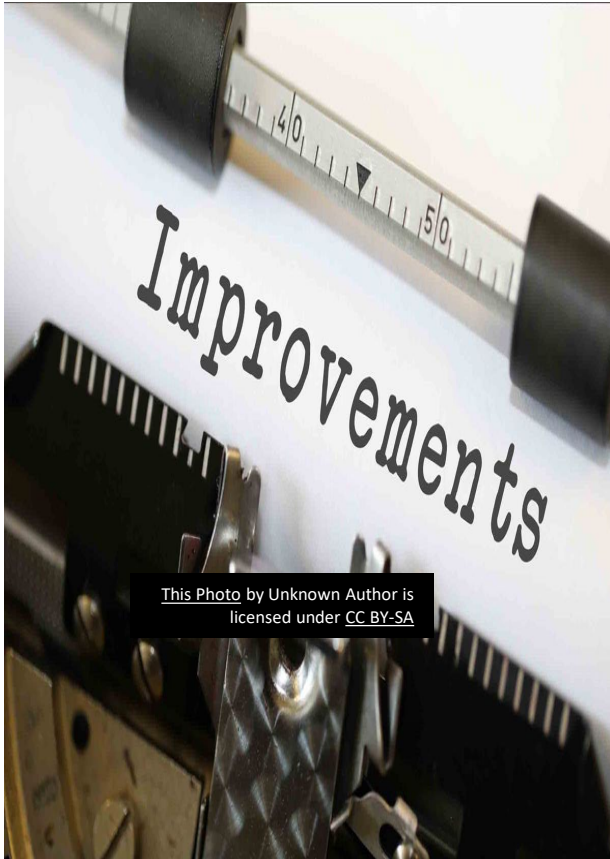
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- **FAFSA OPENED TO ALL ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024.**
- Form IS a clone of 24-25 FAFSA with instructions and help text enhancements
- Likely to still be some issues with the new form
- Beta testing happened in October & November to identify and fix bugs
- As of November 20, more than 120,000 forms were submitted and almost 300,000 ISIRs were sent during the testing period
- The beta website has reports and data about the testing - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/beta>. Many NCAN programs participated in the first phases of testing.
- New “Who’s My Parent” tool as a stand-alone resource to help students determine which contributor(s) need invited to the form- <https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents>



## CHANGES/ ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE 25-26 FAFSA

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- Adding messaging & pop-up boxes for missing signatures and unsub loan only questions to reduce errors
- Contributors without an SSN need to set-up an FSA ID, but the identity verification process has been waived for the entire 25-26 FAFSA cycle
- Financial Aid Estimator is updated to reflect 25-26 calculations - <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
- FSA creating enhanced “how to” resources-documents and videos - [Creating Your StudentAid.gov Account | Federal Student Aid](#)
- Current college students will not have a shortened renewal form available
- At this point, the 45-day clock will not be turned on for the 25-26 cycle

## MORE CHANGES/ ENHANCEMENTS IN PROGRESS

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small changes  
can have  
a big  
impact

<http://daily-ink.davidtruss.com/small-changes>

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

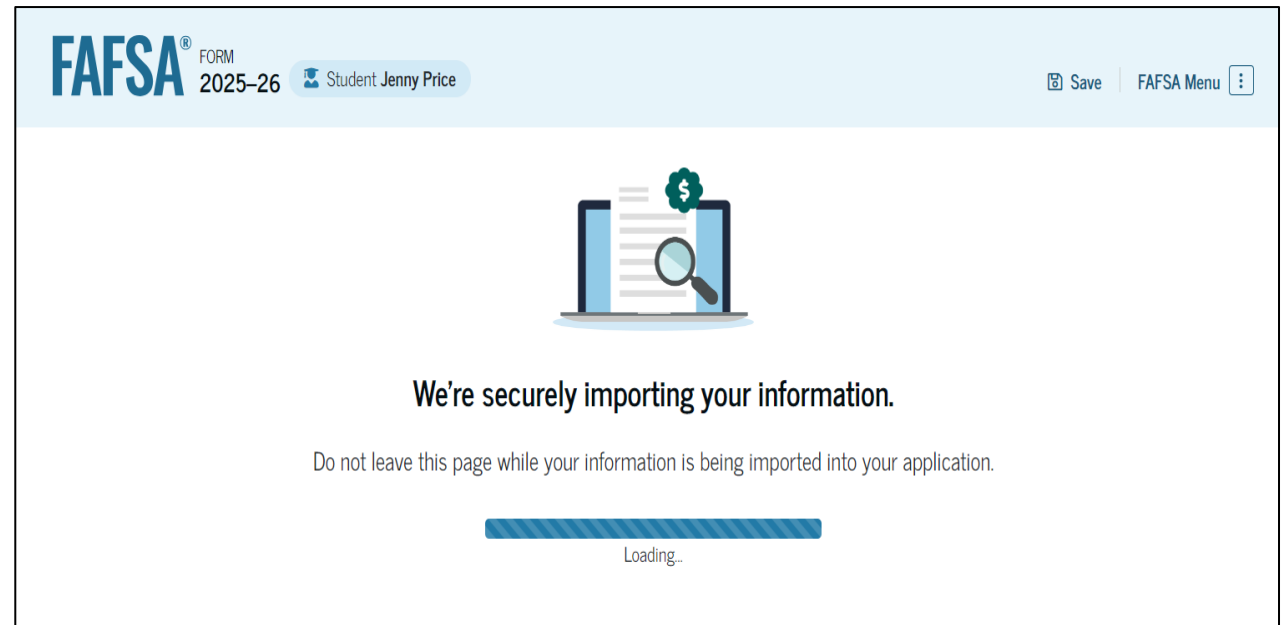
- Call center capacity in August was increased 80% compared to when the FAFSA opened in January
- Continuing to add call center capacity-currently hiring more people and bringing back extended evening and Saturday(partial day) hours for first three months when new cycle begins
- Working on “fuzzy” address matching to come after the form opens-perhaps Street, ST and St. might mean the same thing
- All major vendors will have software updated for 25-26 by the end of beta testing so colleges can update and begin to receiving ISIRs soon after December 1
- Married filing jointly when one contributor does not have an SSN may really mean only one person needs an FSA ID



# New Messages for IRS Transfer

# Dependent Student Imports IRS Information


This page imports the student's federal tax information by directly transferring it into the FAFSA<sup>®</sup> form from the IRS to help complete the "Student Financials" section.





The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 interface. At the top left, it says "FAFSA<sup>®</sup> FORM 2025-26" and "Student Jenny Price". At the top right, there are "Save" and "FAFSA Menu" buttons. In the center, there is an icon of a laptop with a magnifying glass and a dollar sign. Below the icon, the text reads: "We're securely importing your information." and "Do not leave this page while your information is being imported into your application." At the bottom, there is a blue progress bar and the text "Loading..".

# PARENT SECTION

**FAFSA**<sup>®</sup> Form 2025–26 Parent of Raya Tran Save | FAFSA Menu



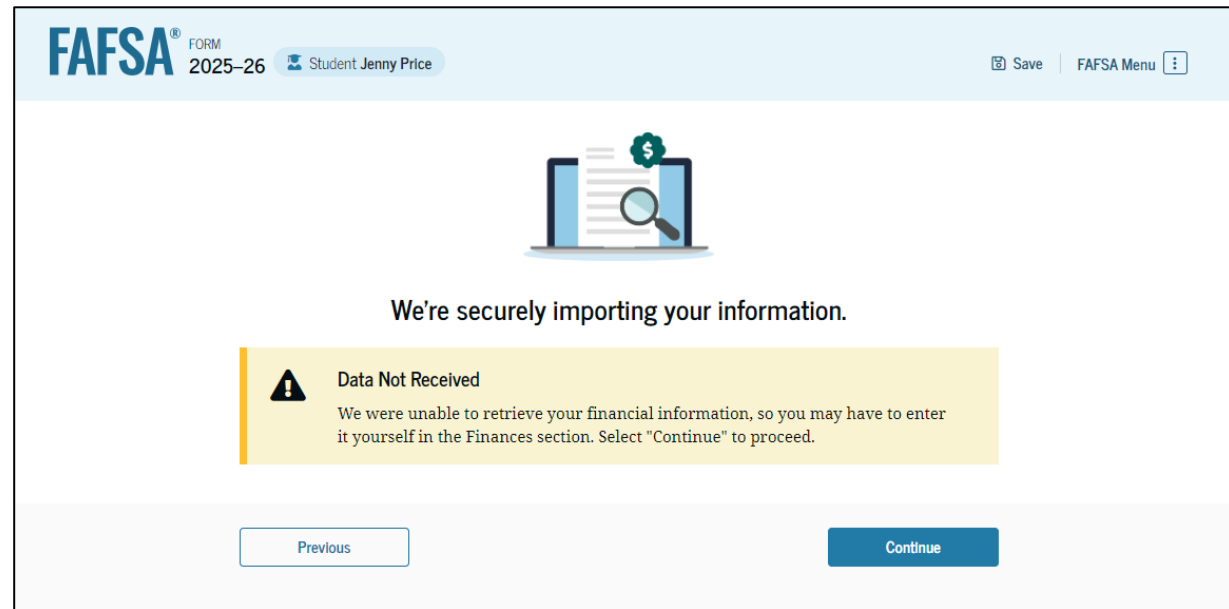
We're securely importing your information.

  **Success!**  
We have confirmed your information with the IRS, but you may have to answer additional questions in the Finances section. Select "Continue" to proceed.

Previous Continue

# Dependent Student Imports IRS Information (Continued)

This page displays the results from the IRS import for the student. For this scenario, the student is starting a new FAFSA® form and there is no federal tax information available from the IRS.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 interface for Student Jenny Price. The page header includes the FAFSA logo, the year 2025-26, the student's name, and options to Save or view the FAFSA Menu. The main content area features an illustration of a laptop with a magnifying glass and a dollar sign, indicating a search or import process. Below this, a message states: "We're securely importing your information." A yellow warning box contains the text: "Data Not Received. We were unable to retrieve your financial information, so you may have to enter it yourself in the Finances section. Select 'Continue' to proceed." At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: "Previous" and "Continue".

# FAFSA Beta

# uAspire

uAspire is a national nonprofit that improves the economic mobility of underrepresented students by creating financial solutions to diverse postsecondary pathways.



## Advising

Support high school and college students to access financial aid and navigate postsecondary systems through in-person and virtual advising.



## Training & Technical Assistance

Equip counselors and program staff with financial aid knowledge and student centered-resources through professional training and support.



## Policy

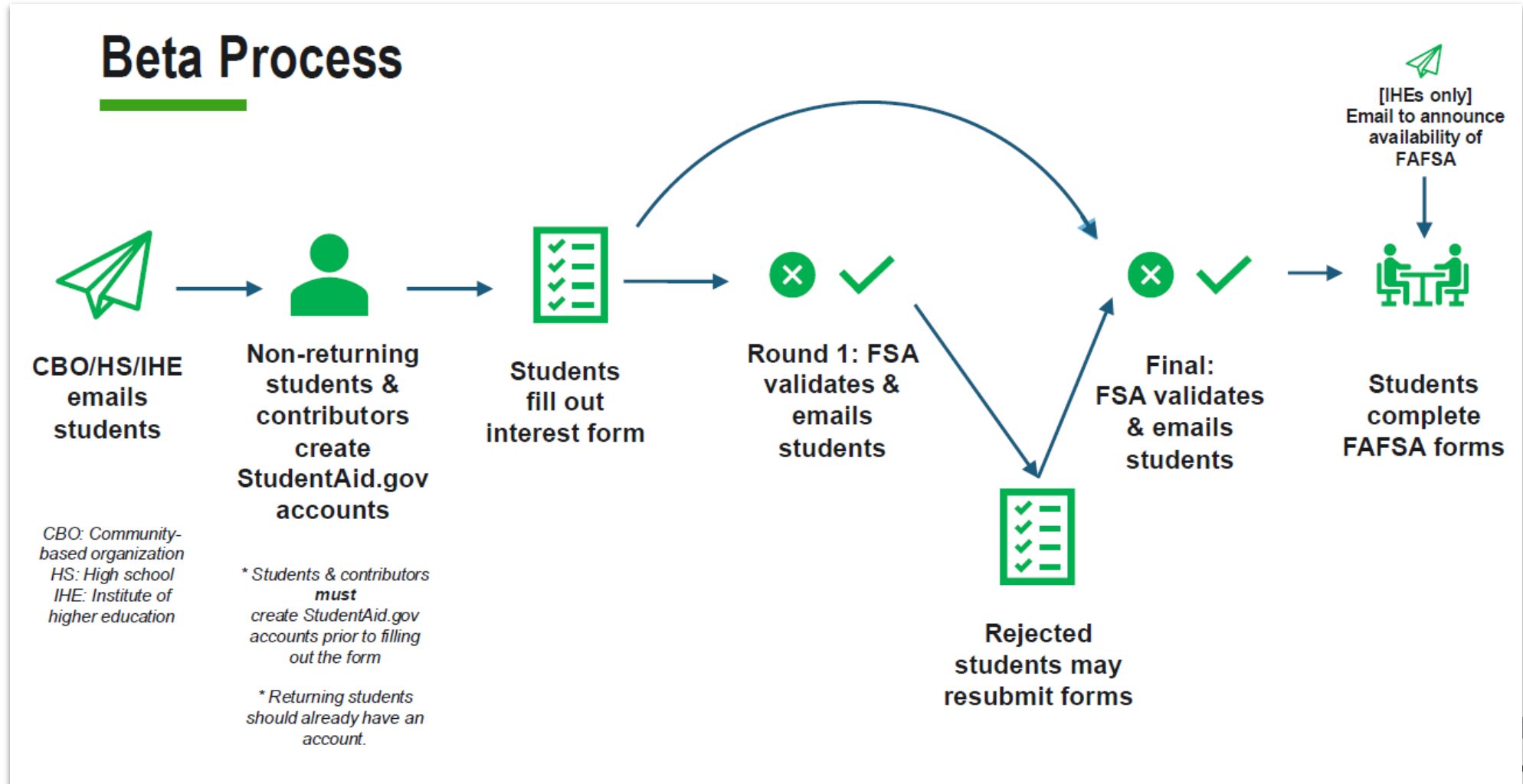
Advocate for federal, state, and institutional policy change to transform financial aid and higher education systems based on our students' lived experiences.



## Consulting

Develop unique solutions to address partners' needs by leveraging our financial aid expertise, advising experience, and student-centered research.

# FAFSA Beta Process



# uAspire's Role in the FAFSA Beta Testing

## Beta 2

- Beta tested via virtual appointments with current college students

## Beta 3

- Beta tested with
  - in-person event in collaboration CUNY John Jay College
  - Virtual appointments





# Beta Testing Wins

## For Students

- Built excitement about the FAFSA
- Got students access and completed FAFSA's early
- Identified challenges/lack of information with specific students
- FSA being present at the event

## The FAFSA

- The form is clearly improved and worked for most students
- DDX transfer notification
- Processing time



# Beta Testing Challenges

## For Students

- Getting them access to the beta
  - Matching FSA ID info
- Matching contributor information for beta access
- Terminology confusion - is the form real?

## The FAFSA

- Contributor invites
- Invite form glitches
  - SSN box
  - Moving cursor
- Manual tax information
- Activity dashboard visibility



# More about the Beta process?

FSA has shared updates about the FAFSA beta throughout the entire process. You can find more information here:

- [FAFSA Beta Updates](#)
- [FAFSA Beta Data](#)

**Participating students:** 223,163

**Participating contributors:** 63,693

**Participating organizations (through Beta 4):** 57

**Participating IHEs:** 5,288

## User Surveys

**Satisfaction:** 95%

**Reasonable time:** 92%

## Outcomes

**Forms submitted:** 122,340

**ISIRs delivered:** 289,216

# 25-26 FAFSA in Action

# Challenges we expect for 25-26

- FAFSA Contributor Invites
  - We continue to expect there to be challenges for students matching parent contributor info on the FAFSA
- Manual tax entry
  - While help text was improved it still does not provide the necessary clarity for contributors to easily enter their information
- Reporting net worth of business/farms
  - Additional clarity has not been provided and we expect struggles in estimating these values
- Section submission vs. FAFSA submission
  - We continue to see confusion around when a FAFSA is fully submitted



# New and Continuing Issues

The [FAFSA issues](#) page is alive and well. Here are some key issues to be aware of:

- Users with no SSN who have an ITIN must manually enter financial information in the form
- Contributors with a pending SSA match status are unable to accept a FAFSA invitation
- Married contributors who filed jointly with their current spouse are being required to invite a non-required contributor to the form
- SAI not calculated due to missing family size



# What we've heard so far...

- **The FAFSA is working well for most students**
  - We are seeing and hearing about very few issues
- Studentaid.gov account (FSA ID) issues
  - Getting kicked out while creating an account and not getting backup code
- Occasional report of issues on the FAFSA with:
  - Invites showing up
  - Consent
  - DDX taking a long time
  - Confusion around additional parent when married filing jointly



# Resources



## NCAN RESOURCES

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- NCAN FAFSA Resources for 25-26 FAFSA - <https://www.ncan.org/page/FAFSA>
- Resource pages for 24-25 FAFSA will remain available
- State Aid deadlines for 25-26 - [State Systems & Financial Aid Information - National College Attainment Network](#) – Please note that many states reverted to deadlines prior to the FAFSA fiasco of last year. Texas has moved to February 15, 2025.
- NCAN Slack Channel for 25-26 FAFSA
- FAFSA Tracker - <https://www.ncan.org/page/FAFSATracker>
- NCAN Social Press Kit - #DoTheFAFSA - <https://socialpresskit.com/dothefafsa> (More resources coming next month)

## UASPIRE RESOURCES

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- **FAFSA Checklist-uAspire-[FY25-FAFSA-Checklist.pdf \(uaspire.org\)](https://www.uaspire.org/files/FY25-FAFSA-Checklist.pdf)** – available in multiple languages
- **FSA ID How To Guide –uAspire - <https://www.uaspire.org/getattachment/eafd9e25-0c22-451e-96bc-4879c0282c80/FY25-FSA-ID-How-to-Guide.pdf?lang=en-US>**
- **A Parent’s Guide to the Parent Section of the FAFSA - <https://www.uaspire.org/resources/financial-aid-resources/a-parent-s-guide-to-the-parent-section-of-fafsa>** – available in multiple languages
- **FAFSA Help Videos** – Currently being updated for the 25-26 FAFSA [https://www.youtube.com/@uAspire\\_org](https://www.youtube.com/@uAspire_org)

## FSA RESOURCES

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- **Financial Aid Estimator**-will provide the family with an estimated SAI and can be used now before the form opens - <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
- **FAFSA Prototype**-provides users with the online practice experience of completing a FAFSA - <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/announcement-detail.jsp?id=fafsa-prototype>
- **Who is My Parent Tool?**-should be used before the FAFSA is started to determine which parent(s) will need to be contributors on the FAFSA - <https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents>
- **All things FSA ID** - [Creating Your StudentAid.gov Account | Federal Student Aid](#)
- **FAFSA Known Issues** - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/topics/fafsa-simplification-information/fafsa-issue-alerts>
- **Financial Aid Toolkit** - <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/resources.jsp>
- **Beta Testing Updates** - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/beta>

## FSA RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

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- **Student Aid Index and Pell Eligibility Guide for 25-26** - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/20252026StudentAidIndexSAIandPellGrantEligibilityGuide.pdf> (Note: does not contain the Min/Max Pell Poverty Tables)
- **FAFSA Specifications Guide** - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/handbooks-manuals-or-guides/2024-08-23/2025-26-fafsa-specifications-guide-october-2024-update-5>

# Question & Answer